

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on December 8, 2009. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 21 have been amended, claims 16-20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new claims 22-24 have been added. Claims 1-15 and 21-24 remain pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over iButton and further in view of Richard et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,564,120. While Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1 and 21 to more sharply define the claimed invention over the prior art of record and respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

As Examiner will note, amended independent claim 1 recites, as part of the claimed combination, a plurality of tracking devices that are configured to (i) monitor the presence of a plurality of items associated with each of the inner storage units, (ii) monitor the temperature of the items and (iii) generate tracking data, with a real-time clock tracking the timing of events associated with the items. The events include temperature, location and access to the plurality of items by a user. An access control system grants access and identifies access to the plurality of items by the user

through an identification of the user. A processing device reads and records the tracking data from the plurality of tracking devices, the timing of the events, and the identification of the user from the access control system.

Independent claim 21, as now amended, recites, as part of the claimed combination, means for tracking a plurality of items, wherein the tracking means is configured to (i) monitor the presence of at least one item associated with the storing means, (ii) monitor the temperature of the item and (iii) generate tracking data, with a real-time clock tracking the timing of events associated with the item. The events include location and access to the plurality of items by a user. Amended independent claim 21 further recites means for granting access and identifying access to the item by the user through an identification of the user and means for processing, wherein the processing means reads and records the tracking data from the tracking means, the timing of events, and the identification of the user from the means for granting access and identifying access to the item by the user.

Support for these amendments is provided in Paragraphs [0044] through [0057] of Applicants' disclosure, for example.

The Examiner asserts that the iButton tracks access to an item by a user and the identification of the user as recited in each of independent claims 1 and 21. Without conceding to the Examiner's assertion, Applicants respectfully submit that iButton taken alone, or in combination with Richard et al. or any of the other prior art of record, fails to fairly teach or suggest a storage system including a real-time clock that

tracks the timing of events associated with the items, wherein the events include temperature, location and access to the plurality of items by an user (claim 1) or location and access to the plurality of items (claim 21), and a processing device that reads and records the tracking data from the plurality of tracking devices, the timing of the events, and the identification of the user from the access control system as now recited in amended independent claims 1 and 21.

While iButton may grant access to an item and identify a user as argued by Examiner, iButton is completely silent with respect to tracking the timing of access to an item, and recording the time of access and the identification of the user accessing the item as now recited in each of amended independent claims 1 and 21. Richard et al. fails to cure this deficiency.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that each of amended independent claims 1 and 21 recites a combination of elements not fairly taught or suggested by the prior art of record, and the rejections of these claims should be withdrawn.

Moreover, as claims 2-15 depend from allowable independent claim 1, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of steps not fairly taught or suggested by the prior art of record, the rejections of these claims are submitted to be allowable as well.

New independent claim 22 recites, as part of the claimed combination, a plurality of tracking devices configured to (i) monitor the presence of a plurality of items

removably stored within the storage unit and (ii) generate tracking data, with a real-time clock tracking the timing of events associated with the items. The events include location and access to the plurality of items by a user. An access control system grants access and identifies access to the plurality of items by the user through an identification of the user. A processing device reads and records the tracking data from the plurality of tracking devices, the timing of events, and the identification of the user from the access control system.

For the same reasons as set forth above with respect to the rejections of independent claims 1 and 21 over the combination of iButton and Richard et al., Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 22, and claims 23 and 24 depending therefrom, are allowable as well.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing response including the amendments and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and early notice to this affect is earnestly solicited. If there is any issue that remains which may be resolved by telephone conference, Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve the same and expedite the allowance of this application.


Please see the electronic fee calculation sheet for the charge in the amount of \$1,110 for the three months extension fee as required by 37 C.F.R. §1.17(a)(3). If any other fees are necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to

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charge any underpayment or fees associated with this communication or credit any
overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

WOOD, HERRON & EVANS, L.L.P.



David H. Brinkman, Reg. No. 40,532

2700 Carew Tower
441 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202-2917
(513) 241-2324 - Voice
(513) 241-6234 - Facsimile